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ABSTRACT

This book is the result of a project to identify and disseminate examples of good practice in providing for children experiencing social, emotional, and behavioral difficulties in schools. The focus is on whole-school or classroom approaches to mainstreaming with experience from teachers of preschool to secondary grades. A major theme is providing a high-quality learning experience for special education pupils by integrating them with their fellow students and avoiding the damaging effects of labeling them as disruptive. Educational responses that are beneficial for all pupils are emphasized. Chapters include: (1) "Partnership with Parents" (S. McGhee); (2) "Classroom Management Strategies in a Primary School Class" (R. Russell); (3) "Circle Time" (J. Campbell, J. Dominy); (4) "Raising the Expectations of Parents and Children through Positive Reinforcement" (E. Ferrie); (5) "Primary-Secondary Transition Programme: A Better Chance of Success" (P. Sharp); (6) "Support for Learning across the Curriculum" (R. McDonald); (7) "Developing a Whole School Policy for Behaviour Support" (M. Fleming); (8) "The Role and Work of a Behaviour Support Unit" (K. Young); (9) "Networking for Behaviour Support Teachers" (J. Thomson, C. Wilson). (EMK)

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Sharing good practice

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Sharing good practice

Prevention and support concerning pupils presenting social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Edited by Gwynedd Lloyd and Pamela Munn

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Preface

This book is the result of a project to identify and disseminate examples of that elusive phenomenon, good practice, in providing for children experiencing social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The focus is on mainstream schools, demonstrating some of the interesting and innovative work which is taking place. The book builds on the examples and strategies identified in *Schooling with care?* and focuses on whole-school and classroom approaches rather than on national or authority level policies and procedures described in *Schooling with care?*

Teachers have a great deal of skill, knowledge and experience in providing a good quality education for children experiencing social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Yet they rarely make this explicit beyond their own schools or classrooms. This collection is written by teachers for teachers and the freshness and practicality of the approaches used will, we hope, be a source of inspiration and experiment for others. Of course, approaches cannot be transplanted in a straightforward way from one school to another. What works in one school, with its own unique history, tradition and ethos will not necessarily work in another. The ideas and suggestions contained in this volume are intended to stimulate reflection, debate and discussion. What does our school already do well in this area? How can we use some of the ideas in the book to develop our practice? Which ideas seem particularly pertinent to our own situation?

The book spans experience from pre-school to secondary with a contribution on the important area of primary-secondary transition. Some contributions concern whole-school practice while others concentrate on the classroom. In short, we hope that there is something here which will be of interest to most of the teaching profession.

One of the main themes running through all the contributions is a concern with providing a high-quality learning experience for pupils by integrating them with their fellow pupils and avoiding the damaging effects of labelling pupils as disruptive. Such labelling can be the result of well-intentioned responses, such as special provision which takes a pupil out of the classroom for prolonged periods, or a specially adapted curriculum. There is much to learn from learning support teachers about sensitive responses to pupils' needs which promote feelings of self-worth and self-esteem in the pupils' concerned, rather than reinforce notions of difference and inferiority.

Thus the focus is on educational responses, approaches which are beneficial for all pupils not just those presenting social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. They include the use of 'Circle Time', positive reinforcement strategies and the use of praise and rewards. Accounts are

also given of different kinds of support structures for pupils experiencing difficulties, such as a review base, integrating learning support with guidance and developing the curriculum to be inclusive rather than exclusive.

In the time and space available it has not been possible to include everything. Obvious gaps, for instance, are accounts of the use of group work and of peer counselling. Nor have we included accounts of explicitly therapeutic approaches such as anger control. These await another volume. We hope, however, that we have provided sufficient of interest to whet the appetite for more. Indeed, school clusters or networks of behaviour support teachers may wish to write their own volume and share good practice within their own local area.

Pamela Munn
Gwynedd Lloyd
February 1997.

Acknowledgements

This publication would not have been possible without the help and support of a great many people. Our prime debt of gratitude is, of course, to the contributors who gave up their evenings and weekends to write about their practice. Writing succinct prose is a difficult task which our contributors had to fit in with many other competing demands on their time. We are grateful for their efforts, patience and good humour.

The publication has benefited from the advice of a small project group who provided ideas about content and identified possible contributors. Group members were Margaret Byrne, Arklestone Primary, Renfrew; Willie Crosbie, Castlebrae High School, Edinburgh; Paul Hamill, Faculty of Education, University of Strathclyde; Christine Wilson, Glenrothes High School; John Wilson, latterly replaced by Anna Boni, both from Educational Psychological Services, City of Edinburgh; and Frank O'Hagan HMI. Frank O'Hagan helped with the final editing and provided support through the inevitable ups and downs of the publication process.

Within Moray House we wish to acknowledge the help of Alan Hunter in the publications unit for liaising with designers and printers and of Lesley Scullion who coped with copy in various shapes and sizes with her customary efficiency and good humour.

Final responsibility for sins of commission and of omission lies with the editors.

Quotations from teachers in Chapters 1-8 are taken from Moray House research on school exclusions and on school discipline.

Partnership with parents

Sheena McGhee, St Timothy's Primary School, Coatbridge

Background

St Timothy's is a denominational primary school with a non-denominational nursery class located in Kirkshaws, Coatbridge. There are 56 children attending the Nursery on a part-time basis and 275 pupils in the main school. A large percentage of our pupils live in an area classified as requiring priority treatment. An area of priority treatment is classified as such because of such factors as high unemployment, poor quality housing, lack of amenities and so on. Our staffing ratio is enhanced to help compensate for social factors and we use this staffing enhancement to make smaller classes in P1, 2 and 3. We have 12.5 teachers in school and one nursery teacher, one nursery nurse and one nursery assistant.

Areas of concern

Over the years the Early Years staff identified an increasing number of children who were starting school with an immense lack of language and other complex difficulties. The headteacher, in consultation with senior management and the teaching and nursery staffs, examined this problem in great detail. It was agreed that most parents wanted their children to do well at school. Even parents who are experiencing problems at home, typically want what is best for their child. However, some parents lacked confidence and understanding of how best to help. We therefore had to communicate more effectively with all our parents. We needed to:

- share information with them;
- involve them in their children's education;
- raise their self-esteem and level of motivation.

In effect we wanted to promote a valued 'Partnership with Parents'. An important aspect of our remit was to ensure that children related with one another in an appropriate manner. 'Good' behaviour was highlighted and positively reinforced.

Since we have a nursery class attended by a large percentage of our children, we had an excellent opportunity to extend our existing Early Intervention Programme. We drew up a Plan of Action which we estimated would take approximately three years to implement.

Strategies for action

Year 1

A We introduced a ***Welcoming Rota*** to improve the ethos of the nursery. This involved a member of staff being available at the beginning of every session to welcome and chat to parents/

children. It was necessary, in our opinion, to build in time to listen to parents as well as talk to them. In this way, we were able to begin to build sound relationships with our parents. Staff worked consistently at providing an attractive environment which was warm and welcoming and made children, parents and others feel secure and valued.

B To begin the process of sharing information we made use of the following strategies:

- An ***Open Evening*** where we explained what we did in the nursery.
- ***Four coffee days***, one per term to develop relationships further and provide information which could be beneficial to the parents. For example, invited speakers covered areas such as women's health, welfare benefits, beauty treatments and healthy eating.
- ***Termly newsletters*** were sent to parents. These contained a variety of information about nursery life.
- ***Working at home tasks*** were devised for parents to use at home with their children. These were in the form of a user-friendly leaflet containing ideas, information and some helpful advice.

Year 2

C As part of our induction programme parents were asked/assisted to complete an ***All about me*** booklet on their child. The contents of this booklet were:

- a picture of myself;
- a picture/drawing of my family;
- my favourite things eg toy, story, food, video;
- things I don't like;
- places I've visited eg library, swimming baths, train station.

Parents were sharing information with us about their child which was of great value. They were being involved. This information helped us when planning and making decisions about their children's needs.

D Confidential information regarding special family circumstances and medical details on each child were contained in a ***'pastoral folder'*** which was regularly updated and maintained by the nursery teacher.

Year 3

E A ***Shared Reading Programme*** was introduced to promote:

- good pre-reading skills;
- enjoyment of books at home;
- the extension/ development of language;
- quality parent/child time at home.

Each family participated for one term. They

were invited to attend a few workshops for advice and discussion. They also were given a helpful hints leaflet. Thereafter books were chosen/returned on a weekly basis. On returning books, staff discussed them with the children and consulted with the parents. At the end of the term parents' views were sought in a questionnaire. To complement our stock of books we borrowed from our local library.

F We reviewed our ***Assessment*** policy. Out went checklists which, in our opinion, could give a negative picture of a child. Boxes without ticks meant to parent and child 'I can't do ...'. Instead, we focused on 'I can .../I know how to ...' consciously identifying and building on a child's strengths. When appropriate, needs were identified and supported, sometimes with the help of external agencies. All achievements, including improvements in behavioural patterns, were highlighted, praised and recorded. Parents were actively encouraged to comment on their child's achievements and assist in the assessment process.

> *"You are trying to stick up for your children, but we do work well together now. I think that's why the teacher puts up with what she does from Matthew because we've given each other support throughout it all."*
>
> (Parent of a primary school child)

G A ***Record of Achievement*** was introduced for each child which contained evidence of achievement in and out of nursery beginning with their ***All about me*** booklet. With parental agreement this record is passed to the appropriate primary school. To date, no-one has refused. It is generally passed on with great pride.

Successful outcomes

So far we can identify four positive outcomes:

- Parents are more willing to become involved in the nursery and in their children's work.
- Parents have commented favourably on the various ways we share information with them and have offered other suggestions.
- Parents' responses to our Assessment Programme and Records of Achievement are very positive.
- Primary 1 staff have some evidence of pupils' increased level of attainment in language and of more settled, appropriate behaviour.

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Points to remember

For other schools thinking about promoting positive relationships with parents, there are some points to bear in mind:

- It is necessary to have long-and short-term plans. These may include behavioural targets.
- Take on one or two aspects at any one time.
- Targets, including behavioural ones, must be realistic and achievable.
- There must be a system of evaluation to monitor progress and measure success.
- Staff must be committed, consulted and informed.
- Some parents might need a lot of advice and encouragement.

The way forward

We are building on our success with parents by taking part in a formal Early Intervention Literacy Programme with psychological services in North Lanarkshire. We are more confident about participation in literacy programmes now that we have a positive partnership with parents. After all, children spend comparatively little time in school or nursery and active parent involvement is an important influence on children's achievement and social progress. The spin-off on children's motivation and behaviour is noticeable. Most people respond positively to being genuinely valued and appreciated.

Classroom management strategies in a primary school class

Rhona Russell, Arkleston Primary, Renfrew

Background information

Arkleston Primary is a semi-open plan school. The school roll is 368, giving two class groups at each stage P1-P7. Our children are taught in a double base with two teachers working cooperatively. We have an eager band of parent helpers for activity times and the time-tabled support of the assistant headteacher for learning support. The design of the school has always allowed a number of pupils with special needs to attend, with the extra help of special educational needs auxiliary staff (1.2 FTE).

Arkleston operates a positive discipline system. The good behaviour, hard work and helpful attitudes which most of the children display are not taken for granted. Adult approval is made explicit by rewarding desired behaviour and attitudes. We give praise points and stickers. We support children with difficulties by trying very hard to 'catch them being good'!

Early intervention as a matter of course

We have a series of pre-school induction days each May. The new P1 intake visit once a week for five weeks. Children experience a variety of classroom activities and get to know their teacher and classmates. Parents meet the promoted staff and are given short introductions to the materials and methods to be used with their children.

The P1 teachers and SEN staff also visit the children in their own nursery. We talk to nursery nurses and teachers who share their detailed knowledge of the children with us. These visits can highlight any potential problems and allow preparations to be made to deal with them.

It is through these normal liaison strategies that we identify children presenting behavioural difficulties.

The challenges

On their first visit to the school, some children stand out because they may be bigger or noisier than the rest of the new intake. Some display aggressive behaviour towards other children. Discussions with the nursery staff, who also visit us, highlight their difficult behaviours as follows:

- very limited concentration span;
- inability to sit still or interact in group activities;
- frequent tantrums;
- a habit of throwing themselves on the floor;
- aggression towards other children;
- an extreme need for adult attention.

It may emerge that in the nursery those children had the benefit of one-to-one behaviour support to help when they became 'difficult'. They may have needed someone to be with them at all times to keep them on task. (This additional resource would generally not continue when they come to school.)

A few children are well-known and unfortunately already classed as 'bad' by children and parents alike. Their own parents may be reluctant at this point to say too much about their background.

The opportunities

When children with difficulties have attended nursery, staff there know them well. Staff may have already developed strategies that work. To share this knowledge, visits to the nursery are carried out by our AHT and special needs auxiliary — whose training as a nursery nurse can be put to very good use. A future class teacher can visit and spend a morning shadowing a child. The visits allow staff to:

- observe children and note their needs;
- begin to establish a bond;
- gain confidence and trust;
- discover their likes and dislikes;
- begin to plan the necessary positive behaviour strategies.

The strategies adopted

For a few children, behavioural difficulties can be quite extreme. Our discipline system alone would not be enough to sustain them in a mainstream class. If they are to cope in mainstream primary, we know that they will need a great deal of additional support when they start school. In the past we decided to target our existing resources to implement an early intervention programme. We:

- timetabled our special needs auxiliary to PL every morning;
- set a pupil small, specific, achievable targets and 'caught them being good';
- worked closely with parents;
- used Tacade activities to build personal and social skills.

In practice, this meant that we planned our strategies with great care as the following example shows:

1) *The gradual reduction of auxiliary support.* The special needs auxiliary has been an extra pair of eyes in the class. She has acted as a minder for a pupil but she gradually took steps back to allow him/her to act independently. She has moved from being a pupil's blinkers to being a shadow in the background, aware of him/her but not working directly with him/her. As a team, staff have been able to work in the class with minimal disturbance.

2) *A 'teddy bear' target sheet has been used for motivational purposes.* For short periods of time a pupil was expected and encouraged to meet a target designed to change an unacceptable behaviour. We would give happy smiles when he/she met specific target behaviour, for example, 'sit at together time' or 'listen at listening times'. The accumulation of smiles meant a treat at the end of the agreed session. This is when a highly desirable award can come in handy! (Fifteen minutes of 'being good' rewarded instantly by five minutes play — at something which a pupil loves!) As a pupil masters each target, another should be planned. We try to tackle one thing at a time and set targets for asking for things (to cure grabbing) and for other kinds of behaviour (to avoid a pupil hurting other children).

> *" We try to catch them being good, instead of always being down on them for bad behaviour. Everyone has some good moments. "*
>
> (Teacher: promoting Positive Discipline in Scottish Schools)

3) *Working hard at developing good relations with parents.* At the beginning of term, it is helpful if parents are invited to the school and any problems are discussed with them. In general, parents are very concerned about behavioural difficulties and wish to have their child successfully integrated in mainstream education. Our strategy is to explain to them the workings of our target sheet. Targets and times are discussed with a pupil and their parents. A mother might come in and sign the sheet daily and we would alter the timings and tasks as progress is made. We aim to catch a pupil being good and reward him/her immediately with a smiling teddy. We also encourage both mum and dad to come into the classroom as parent helpers. This gives them the chance to see the good side of their child as well as less appropriate behaviour. They are able to see that many of the other children also 'have their moments'. This has helped parents to put their child's difficulties into perspective.

4) *Building self-esteem.* With the rest of the class, a pupil should have the opportunity to build his/her own skills of cooperation, trust, self-esteem and confidence through, for example, the use of activities from the TACADE materials — Skills for the Primary School Child.'

Outcomes of positive behaviour strategies

Parental Attitudes

It is our policy to work closely with parents and to ensure that there is a consistency between work at school and parental responses at home. Through the use of shared targets, parents can support and reinforce the work of the school. They can learn to focus on good aspects of their child's behaviour and respond appropriately. It is important that they develop ways of using praise effectively. As behaviour improves at school, parents can decide on rewards at home. These need not be financial or material rewards but can be time with them to do things that their children enjoy.

As a teacher, it is most satisfying when parents are happy with their children's achievements and are no longer depressed about the mountain of things they cannot do. These children are not bad, they are badly behaved. They can learn how to behave and are just like other children, some days very well-behaved and others not so well-behaved. As staff, we want parents to leave the primary classroom beaming, bantering with others, no longer shuffling head down, apologising for their children before hearing what is to be said.

'Targeted' children

Children can be assisted through their target sheets to learn to behave appropriately. They can learn to look before they sit and to walk instead of charging in class or down the corridor. We aim to help children to be respected and liked by their peers.

We wish our 'difficult' children to blend in with the class during structured play. They can sit and listen as well as most at 'show and tell', and at work time settle to tasks within their capabilities. They should work independently as much as possible. More settled behaviour has allowed friendships to form. These children are excited and delighted to be allowed to go to a friend's house to play after school instead of being rejected. Friendship means so much to our primary pupils.

School

As each target is met, we move on a little at a time. With behaviour more settled, we can concentrate on the learning difficulties children might have. Support from home as well as at school allows progress to be made at a child's own level and pace. Now no longer forcing inappropriate work at home, both parents and children can become calmer, more relaxed and fully supportive of our efforts.

Successful Strategies

To ensure that the positive behaviour strategies work, there must be a partnership between home and school. The strategies will not work if everyone concerned is not fully committed to them. Key points are:

- Rewards should follow as a direct result of good target behaviour eg a happy smile on chart for the target behaviour. Merit points, oral praise or a pat on the back help reinforce overall good behaviour at all other times.
- Rewards must be immediate to highlight the good and appropriate behaviours.
- Targets must be dealt with consistently. Behaviour cannot be acceptable one day and not the next.
- Rewards should be given frequently. Begin with small, easily obtainable targets and build up the success rate. The consistent attainment of target behaviour should be followed by a very gradual reduction of the level of awards until the behaviour is maintained by the positive reinforcement which occurs naturally in the course of a day.

Our school has had its success stories because we could follow the above strategies. We have had the valuable resource of a special educational needs auxiliary and the flexible approach to target her appropriately.

If any one of the above is missing then success may not be forthcoming. Parent, school and child should work together and everyone will benefit.

Circle time

Jean Campbell and Joan Dominy, Glendale Primary School, Glasgow

Setting the scene

Glendale Primary School is a small, semi-open plan school on the south side of Glasgow. It is an inner city primary, built in 1979 with very limited teaching areas. It has nice grounds, large, grassy areas, a football pitch and playground areas, but it is in a street where many of the tenement flats are boarded up and where there are problems in the evening between groups of young people and the police. Like most inner city areas, many people with different social, religious, cultural and linguistic backgrounds live there and this enriches our school environment. The school also has many children whose parents have chosen to send their children to Glendale, looking for the kind of caring ethos that we have set out to develop.

From the very beginning, all members of staff have attempted to promote the kind of environment in which all children can be confident that they are valued and in which they can develop both educationally and socially. This has not been easy. The most outstanding area which had to be tackled was the influence of racism on the black and Asian children in the school. Over a period of ten years, we worked on developing three policy areas which should have had a direct effect on this:

- a policy of bilingual teaching at the early stages;
- a school ethos policy;
- an anti-racism policy.

In many ways these policies have had a good effect on all members in our school environment. However, some of our pupils continue to experience racism in their local community and beyond. 'Circle time' was originally seen by us as a way of tackling these particular social difficulties. It has now developed into a key plank in our general personal and social development programme.

So how did we arrive at 'Circle time' as a tool in our PSD programme? It happened, as many excellent developments often happen, by accident initially and then in perceptive classroom use by one of our teachers.

A few years ago we had been working on talking and listening as part of our school development plan and had attended an in-service programme in this curricular area. The materials used in the INSET programme seemed an excellent way of developing positive attitudes among children towards themselves and others. The P7 teacher felt this would help her to create the kind of climate our school ethos statement said we should have, but which can be very difficult to develop and maintain. And, from there, developments spiralled. Other teachers in the school became interested and decided to 'have a

go'. Later, our innovative teacher moved on to P4 and then to P1 and developed the work in these areas, adapting it to meet the needs of younger children.

Following a survey of staff and parents the following year, all members of staff agreed that we needed to further develop these positive ways of tackling the continuing problems. Some children were viewed by others as inferior because of racism, or because of their perceived lack of ability or because of stereotypical attitudes toward certain groups. We therefore decided to make PSD a priority within our development plan and make 'Circle time' a central feature.

Another vital area of development for us was to work bilingually with our P1 and 2 children. This was important because many of them were stronger in their mother tongue than in English. Also, of course, using Panjabi gave status to both the language and to the children using it and enhanced their positive self-image.

> *" Discipline should be a joint pupil and staff policy, not an imposed one — as pupils resent rules which have no apparent purpose. "*
>
> (Secondary Teacher)

'Circle time' in action

So how does 'Circle time' work? In this section there is a description of setting the circle and some of the activities which are used across the school with remarkable success.

Firstly, creating the circle is extremely important.

- The children clear the furniture — even P1 can do this — and set out a circle of chairs on which everyone, including the teacher, sits.
- The circle must be good enough so that each person can see everyone else's face. This establishes the specialness of the circle.
- Overall, the goal is to give value to every child's status regardless of their family circumstances. Children of poor academic ability often have credibility because so much of the work is about their life-styles and they can participate on an equal basis.

Examples of some P1 activities

In P1, the particular aims are that children:

- learn everyone's name;
- work with and sit beside everyone else in the class;
- begin to feel that they are valued by others and that what they have to say is important to everyone else;
- start to learn about responsibility and moral accountability in a practical way;
- improve their talking and listening skills;
- enjoy working in a different physical setting.

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The following examples illustrate the kind of activities that can be used in P1:

1 Pupils say how they feel and why, when holding a special object eg a wooden apple or a stone. They listen to each other and ask questions.

2 Standing in the circle, children face out with the teacher in the centre. They turn round showing the expression the teacher asks for. This activity can be just a game or it can lead on to talking with a partner, or in a small group, about real situations that made them happy, worried, angry and so on. Their feelings can be reported back to the whole circle.

3 Everyone, including the teacher sits either on the chairs or the floor. The teacher rolls the ball to someone after calling their name; each person can only have the ball once so they must watch and listen. With practice the ball can be thrown and, eventually, once pupils throw it, they follow it into the space of the person they threw it to and whose name they called.

4 In groups of 4 (6 if they can) start with one person saying 'My name is ... and I like ... (colours, food etc)'. The second person then says 'Her/his name is ... and s/he likes ...; my name is ... and I like ...' and so on.

5 Children sit in the circle with one chair missing, and one person in the centre of the circle. That person says 'Everyone with ... black shoes, or brown eyes etc' and all those pupils that have these features are asked to find a new seat.

6 In groups of 4-6, children sort out pictures or eventually statements about, for example, playground behaviours into those that lead to easy/happy times at school and those that do not. The group report back to the whole circle, with discussion of comparison between groups and the implications for class behaviour. Eventually children can enter into a contract on an issue they decide they need to improve.

In all tasks, there must be a time limit set and an opportunity for evaluation after the trial period.

7 Trust games start with lots of discussion in the circle about trust. Then, the children begin to take part in activities in which they must trust another person and that person must be able to trust them. They work in pairs with one person leading another person who has his/her eyes closed around the room or the hall. The 'blind' persons are the ones who choose their partners and they must choose someone they trust. To begin with, the leading pupils hold one hand and put their other arm around the body of their partner to lead them around. Eventually the pair work with just one fingertip touching.

Many of these activities will become 'warm-up' activities in the juniors and

seniors where 'issues' become the important features of 'Circle time'. In the later stages we plan to develop ideas such as *friendship* or *trust*.

Examples of some P4/5 activities

A session in the middle stages might be organised as follows:

1 Warm-up: ball-rolling or seat-swapping;
2 Setting the scene: 'How do I feel today?';
3 Activity: trust — sitting in friendship groups, brainstorm over what pupils like doing together, how they feel about their friendships; then the formation of the whole circle for report, back looking for common elements; then on to a deeper examination of trust through discussion about what that means to each person.

Examples of P6/7 activities

In the upper stages where we are aiming to help everyone assess as honestly as possible his/her own personalities and attributes, a session might take the following form:

1 Warm-up: 'How do I feel today?' and chair-swapping activity;
2 Individual activity: pupils writing a list of words to describe their personalities, then doing same for previously identified partners.
3 With partner: comparing findings and putting stars beside ones with which they agree — looking for honesty; then picking one attribute and saying how this can contribute to membership of the class or school community; examining negatives in the same way and discussing strategies for change.
4 Group activity: in the whole circle, pupils hold a general discussion leading to the working out of a contract for change, where each agrees on what he/she will change and how. (This can range from very simple changes such as, 'I will remember to bring my gym clothes every gym day!' to much more difficult challenges such as anger control.) Tasks should always be specific and able to be monitored.

In all these games and activities children must feel safe — safe to talk about feelings, safe to trust others and so on. There should be agreed 'rules' so that damaging and hurtful things are not said and children should be able to 'pass' if they want to. Many shy children or children who do not initially feel confident in themselves, did use this option a lot but, as the work continued and confidence grew, they too began to be involved in all activities.

Future developments

In the school we are now all using 'Circle time' techniques with ideas from

'Face to Face' (which now has a primary school pack) and also the TACADE materials in every class. In the course of the year, teachers have been able to work cooperatively with the key teacher as they developed their confidence in using these techniques. The view of everyone is very positive and teachers are all now committed to this way of working. We have been able to tackle many difficult areas and attitudes. A policy statement has been written by a working party of teachers and agreed by all. As a school we are moving on to other areas of 5-14 now, but our PSD programme with 'Circle time' as a central feature continues to build in strength. In this way, behavioural difficulties are greatly reduced and altruistic activities maximised.

Raising the expectations of parents and children through positive reinforcement

Eileen Ferrie, St. Rose of Lima Primary School, Glasgow

Context

The focus of this article is both my classroom and the school as a whole. We are in an area of priority treatment and have a school roll of around 300. We have a number of children who experience social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. I have a Primary 6 class with a roll of 26. There is a very strong whole school approach to personal and social development and, in particular, positive reinforcement of good behaviour which I try to mirror in my own classroom practice.

My most memorable experience as a student occurred in a school in Leicester. The particular class was large and had pupils with a range of learning and behavioural difficulties. However, each day began with 'special person time' which meant a child's name was picked from a jar and each child in the class was encouraged to say something positive about that person. They were then the special person for the rest of the day. The children's response to this daily activity had both a massive and lasting impact on my own teaching practices. I was already convinced of the power of positive reinforcement which was also very evident at St. Rose of Lima when the Quality Assurance Unit published its report in November 1992. It stated, 'There is a major challenge facing education in the area ... the biggest single task is ... how to raise the expectations of both parents and youngsters.' This report emphasised how crucial positive expectations were and indicated that a powerful tool to achieve this can be positive reinforcement.

Reasons for using this particular approach

I chose the strategy of raising expectations through positive reinforcement for various reasons. Many children who present behavioural and/or emotional difficulties have a very poor self-image. From my experience, it would seem that when a child's self-image and self-awareness are raised, many of the other important personal and social development skills can be improved, eg interpersonal skills, independence and interdependence. Low self-esteem is exceptionally debilitating and perhaps the old saying that nothing succeeds like success is appropriate. Another reason for choosing this particular approach is that it is manageable, practical and effective. The practices do not require a great deal of planning and organisation. Finally it is very enjoyable to catch the children being good; for many children this

is just the boost they need.

What we do — School

Every Monday morning there is a whole school assembly. During this time results for the previous week's attendance and uniform figures are announced. The winning classes get a trophy with overall winners receiving a termly treat, eg a visit to the pictures. Awards are also given to one child from each class for special achievement over the past week. Recognition is also given through our 'Good Work Wall' on which a piece of work from each class is displayed. In addition, we are encouraged to send children to the headteacher and depute for merit stickers. Each year we have class representatives who meet with the headteacher to discuss any relevant school issues. This all happens in an atmosphere of trust, openness and opportunity. The children are also given regular opportunities to participate in residential trips, which provide excellent occasions for personal and social development and for positive reinforcement of good behaviour.

> *" Teachers (are) making increasing use of praise to encourage and reward pupils' successes. "*
>
> (HMI: Standards and Quality in Scottish Schools 1992-95)

What I do — Class

In my own Primary 6 classroom, I have implemented many practices which are manageable and also serve to complement this whole-school approach to positive reinforcement. Each day starts with the 'special person' technique from Leicester. The children sit in a circle and pass a jar round, each taking it in turn to say something positive about the special person. I have also introduced 'do a deed a day'. The children write down 'good deeds', for example, saying thank you to the dinner ladies. One deed is picked out each day. We also have a selection of 'awards' in cardboard pockets on the wall. We use photocopiable materials from books, such as 'Classroom Timesavers' and all the class teacher needs to do is sign and date them. This sends information and a positive message both to the child and to the parents, double positive reinforcement perhaps. There are photocopiable awards available for everything from craft to good manners. There is also a Superspeller which I use for my weekly spelling tests. This proves a great incentive to the children in part because they are taking home something very positive. In the class I have a helper's board where every child has a job to do each

day. These rotate weekly. Finally, each child has a card on which, he/she has to try and collect ten gold stars. When pupils achieve this target, they take the card to the headteacher to receive the headteacher's award and it is taken home — a further positive message of achievement. All of these individual practices are undertaken in an attempt to increase children's self-awareness and thus raise expectations. Therefore, the atmosphere in the class and approach of the teacher must be appropriate.

Important steps

There are five important points to adopting a positive reinforcement approach:

- Be organised so that the reinforcement is constant and consistent. Generally, I find it is easier to set up these activities, awards and certificates at the beginning of a term.
- It is an added strength that the school as a whole stresses the value of positive reinforcement. It has been vital to both children and parents that praise, rewards and recognition come not only from the class teacher but also the headteacher.
- In order for the children to succeed and therefore raise expectations of further success, they require an appropriate and stimulating curriculum. I liaise regularly with learning support in our school in order to cater for the full range of abilities in the class.
- The class teacher also has a responsibility to foster an atmosphere of trust, recognition and encouragement. It is very worthwhile for the class to decide on their own set of rules and to have them displayed somewhere in the class.
- It is important to continually seek out achievements by all children and promote the view that they are special individuals.

Achievements

In general, most of the pupils respond positively. They become more confident and motivated and often many of the behavioural problems decrease. Often they are obviously happier as they become more aware of their own potential. The atmosphere of the classroom changes noticeably with the children becoming more industrious and less likely to approve of disruptive behaviour from others. In this climate it is easier for the class teacher to identify and deal with repetitive behavioural problems. Positive reinforcement raises the expectations of both pupils and parents. Once the essential life skills relating to self-esteem and self-awareness are being developed, others such as interpersonal skills and independence start to take shape. This is further testimony to the success of this approach. It is very clear that the children are more skilled and confident in these other areas. For many of the children, the parents' reaction to a

reading award or headteacher's award has a very positive impact.

Lessons learned

Through the pursuit of this approach I have been constantly aware of the strength in a team or whole-school approach. The benefits for teacher, pupil and parents when the headteacher comes into class and recognises achievement should not be underestimated. Also, it is not enough simply to use PSD materials in isolation for a specific period. They are designed to raise awareness of certain issues and to develop particular life skills but only have full impact when there is a constant cross-curricular approach to PSD by the teacher. One further lesson which I have learned is that if a child's needs are not met, then he/she either may withdraw or become aggressive. Therefore, it is essential that every effort is made to provide an appropriate curriculum and, where possible, recognise the whole range of a child's needs. I became aware of just how poor a child's self-image can be and of the debilitating influences which can follow. Self-esteem comes from how others perceive pupils and it is the responsibility of the teacher to promote a climate of respect.

Further Developments

In the class, while continuing to use this approach of positive reinforcement, I have been seeking to develop a range of PSD skills. The class is currently involved in 'The Guardianship Programme' which entails visits to the nursery and pairing up with a pre-entrant. This is a school initiative and the children are encouraged to befriend the future Primary 1 pupils in order to ease the transition from nursery to primary school. I am trying to set tasks which hopefully will enhance all areas of PSD.

In topic work the children have been asked to work with a partner researching an associated area. They have to present their study to the rest of the class and the depute head will choose winners. All children will receive certificates for participating. Looking ahead to next year when they will be Primary 7, there will be a lot more opportunity to take a more responsible role in the school. In general, I am constantly looking for new materials and opportunities which will build on the progress made to date. Through fostering a positive ethos and reinforcing appropriate behaviours, disruptive activities are greatly reduced.

Primary - secondary transition programme: a better chance of success

Pauline Sharp, Castlebrae Community High School, Edinburgh

Context

Castlebrae Community High School serves the Craigmillar area in Edinburgh which is one of Edinburgh's most deprived communities. Due to the effects of the Parents' Charter and demographic changes, the school has suffered from a falling roll which has now settled at around 300 pupils. The percentage of students transferring to Castlebrae with social, emotional, behavioural or learning difficulties is higher than average. In order to give these students a better chance of success at Castlebrae, a special transition programme was established.

The programme's main aim is to prepare the P7 pupils for a smooth transition into secondary. It also aims to promote the school positively in our community and, where possible, tackles any prejudices against it. As a principal teacher of guidance, I have the responsibility for the coordination of this programme. I work alongside a team of three guidance teachers and two Instep homelink workers.

The Instep Homelink Project is one that was set up in Castlebrae three years ago, with funding from the Urban Programme, to further the links between parents and the school. Each student has a homelink worker who supports them and their parents with difficult issues relating to their education. Inter-agency work at Castlebrae is well-established through Youth Strategy and this enables agencies such as social work and psychological services to be involved in the transition programme.

This programme has clearly enhanced the quality of liaison between the associated primaries and the secondary and, in doing so, it has made the experience more effective for everyone involved. It has also served, in an informal manner, to identify and prepare to meet the needs of pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Background to the programme

A large number of students make the move from primary to secondary school without trouble and, in fact, may look forward eagerly to the experience. Initially, in Castlebrae, a transition programme was set up for a small group of vulnerable pupils who were identified by their primary schools as pupils who might experience social and emotional, or behavioural difficulties.

In further consultations with the local P7 teachers in Craigmillar and through past transition experiences, it was discovered that the majority of P7 students felt that they

were not adequately prepared for the move. On conducting an exercise which asked pupils to write down their hopes and fears about coming to secondary, the fears by far outweighed the hopes. The following are some examples of these fears: 'I'm scared I get lost', 'I might not have friends in my class' and 'People will make me smoke.'

To help resolve such issues and to make the students feel more secure about the High School, the transition programme was extended to cater for all P7 pupils in the associated primaries. This also avoided labelling any pupils as likely to have difficulties. Parental support was also identified as having an extremely important role to play. This seemed to be missing for many of these P7 pupils as parents regarded transition as a difficult time. The secondary school was seen as a more threatening place to approach. Parents had fears about their children transferring to a new school and they voiced a need to discuss these. Often they did not have enough information or did not know who to ask. As a result, the transition programme was extended further to include information for parents.

> *" It's not just education for the few that come in and don't cause us any problems. ...We've got to improve what the school has to offer to young people (with) behavioural difficulties. "*
>
> (Headteacher, secondary school)

The programme

The Transition Programme lasts for six weeks starting in April and ending in June. At the end of the Transition Programme, the students attend for a three-day visit where they follow their S1 timetable in their new classes. This is preceded by each primary visiting the secondary once a week for six weeks to participate in Art, Music, Home-Economics, PE, Craft and Design and Technology and Physical Education. Earlier in September of the transition year there is an open afternoon where all of the primaries get together and students and parents have the opportunity to try out two subjects of their choice.

The first session in April takes place in the primary school. Here the students meet a member of the guidance team and a homelink worker. They discuss their hopes and fears of coming to the secondary school. These issues have already been drawn up by the class in a prior lesson with their primary teacher. This session takes place in the secure environment of their own primary so that the students feel at ease with the new members of staff. During this visit the guidance teacher and homelink worker meet the class teacher to transfer important information about each student. At this meeting the homelink worker can discuss any parental issues which might help them during their parental visits. Each parent is

visited by a homelink worker during this programme to issue information booklets and to discuss any questions they may have.

The next five sessions take place in Castlebrae. Students are met by a member of the transition team and, along with their primary teacher or helper, they walk to the school. Each session is one hour long with half an hour travelling time. The sessions are spread over two days and students work in four mixed primary groups each day. This gives them the opportunity to start working with new students as well as with new members of staff. Groups are roughly 10-12 in size with two members of staff per group. The transition team consists of guidance teachers, homelink workers, a youth strategy worker, a learning support teacher and primary teachers.

Session two is a group-building session where the groups play various ice-breakers to get to know each other.

Session three introduces the students to the support services available to them and discusses when to use these services. This is done by conducting a short tour to these areas and meeting the key members of staff. The tour would include visits to learning support, the medical room, janitor, school office, library, Instep base, house room and the management area. This is followed by predicament cards which contain familiar scenarios to discuss eg 'You are in English and you are finding the work too difficult, what do you do?'

Session four is some hands-on experience in a department. In this way pupils become more familiar with the work of the school.

Session five is a simulation exercise where the group have to follow a day from an S1 timetable. This exercise is like an orienteering one where the group have to visit the six areas on that day's timetable. On their arrival at the area they have to solve a problem which was posted on a nearby wall. This gives the pupils an idea of what it is like to travel around the school following one day's timetable. Each group follows a different day. At the end of sessions four and five the students are given some time to reflect on their experiences of that day.

The final session takes the form of a quiz show based on TV's 'Strike It Lucky'. Each team of three competes against each other answering questions based on their time at Castlebrae. It is a fun session but it does recap on the important information and facts that have been learned. This is a nice, social way to end the programme for the staff and the students. Following these sessions, the P7 pupils visit the High School for three consecutive days when they follow their S1 timetable.

Getting the programme together

In order to organise the best programme, it was decided to have several joint meetings with all of the staff participating. These meetings, took place

after school at Castlebrae. From these meetings a small working group was established to put the programme together. Time was found for this group to meet in the school day. Once this was completed, we had a working meeting where we presented the programme and provided some training for the whole team. This proved to be quite successful and the staff involved felt more confident at running the exercises. It also gave those pairs of primary schools working together an opportunity to meet prior to delivering the programme. In fact, this meeting was also good fun for the staff. It is important at this stage that everyone feels part of the team and that the primary staff are kept involved at all stages.

Permission is requested from Headteachers at the Cluster Group meeting for a member of staff from each primary to be involved. This is a necessary part of the programme because the P7 teachers feel that it is beneficial to their students for them to be involved in the programme with them so that they can undertake preparation work and follow up work. A review meeting is also built in to the programme. Here staff have the opportunity to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the programme and this also begins the start of the preparation for the following year.

Each year the students complete an evaluation of their experience of the programme. Most students report that they feel much happier about coming to Castlebrae having been through the transition programme. The evaluation also asks them to comment on each of the sessions so that changes can be made to meet the needs of the next year's students. The staff and students usually find this an enjoyable and worthwhile programme. Students are also asked to produce a piece of work about their experience of the programme and this is displayed in the high school during the three-day visit for parents to see. For vulnerable students who have been identified during the programme as students who would benefit from some extra support, a summer programme is run by the homelink workers and the Youth Strategy social worker over July and August. This is to maintain the relationships that have already been established with both students and their parents and thus supporting them even further with the transition to secondary school. It is particularly important that pupils presenting social, emotional and behavioural difficulties receive appropriate guidance and support.

Reflections

As a guidance teacher, I would encourage other people to engage in this type of project as it clearly gives you a great opportunity to get to know your new S1 pupils before they arrive in August. The venture, however, must be a joint one between the primary schools and the

secondary school and a commitment by all is needed at the beginning. Time must also be afforded for the relevant team of workers to meet. This is also an excellent time to engage in some inter-agency work. I feel that communications have greatly improved from primary to secondary school through this exercise and the process has allowed our pupils to experience a smoother transition .

This year we have moved towards involving our new S1 parents in our transition programme. During the three-day visit each parent and child is invited to an interview with a member of the management team. Here they discuss their child's transition to Castlebrae and a contract is agreed between the parents, the child and the school which will enable the child to obtain the most out of being a student at the school. This meeting is another good opportunity to assist pupils experiencing behavioral difficulties and to promote positive behaviour.

This was a new initiative and we hope to develop this work in the future as we believe that the active involvement of parents is an important influence on their children's success at school.

Support for learning across the curriculum

Rosemary McDonald, St Aidan's High School, Wishaw

School context

St Aidan's High School is a large denominational comprehensive school in North Lanarkshire, drawing on a wide and varied catchment area. The immediate environs of the school encompass the areas affected by the closure of the steel industry. The wider catchment area is diverse and includes areas of significant deprivation in addition to substantial areas of owner-occupied housing. The pupils of the school represent the full spectrum of the socio-economic and ability range. The current school roll is approaching 1,300 pupils of whom 12 have Records of Needs.

Ethos

Within St Aidan's High School we firmly believe that effective learning and teaching for all young people within our school community can only take place when an appropriate climate has been created by all education partners, both within the school and beyond, working together towards shared aims to support learning. The sharing of ideas and, more importantly, agreeing strategies which will help realise them, requires an open consultative approach to developing an ethos which allows all members of the school community to feel valued. Actively seeking contributions to establish a collaborative approach to serve the needs of learners and continued self-evaluation of progress in meeting these needs, are paramount in promoting a truly inclusive school which attempts to provide for the needs of all the young people in its care. To achieve the high aims we set out in our school mission statement, viz: 'to promote education of the highest quality for all pupils in our school community', we as teachers have to become learners. We need to work together as a school community, to have a shared sense of purpose and a real sense of the school as a learning community.

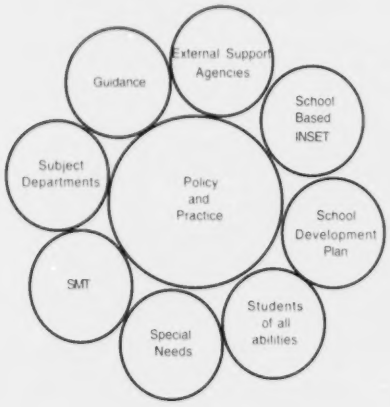
Working towards inclusiveness

As a school we recognised that we had pupils representing the full range of abilities, all with varied learning needs. Through our extensive primary/secondary liaison programme and our close collaboration with our primary colleagues, we recognised that many of these pupils demonstrated learning needs related to the various problems they experienced in a wide range of areas, including social, emotional and behavioural issues.

The attitude we have promoted is one of developing curricular structures and approaches which allow all pupils, whatever their social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, to have full access

a wide-ranging educational experience. To achieve this concept of 'inclusiveness', we have adopted a multi-level strategy, encompassing all aspects of the school's curricular and pastoral provision. The main features of the strategy are illustrated in the management model we have adopted for our extended support for learning policy.

Figure 1 — Extended support for learning - management



This model illustrates the interdependent nature of all school activities. The role/contribution of external agencies, guidance, subject departments, staff development activities and so on must all be brought together and given a clear rationale within the context of the school development plan.

The school development plan

To promote a whole-school approach to supporting learning for all pupils, whatever their learning needs or background difficulties, it was obviously critical that the policy was accorded a high priority in the school development plan. Within the stated priority of support for learning, it was essential to delineate specific targets which identified:

- issues of differentiation of materials and classroom approaches;
- the provision of appropriate staff development activities, both school-based, using the expertise of our own staff, and externally provided in-service;
- the need for personal and professional development of staff in information technology to enhance classroom delivery for pupils of all abilities and with a variety of learning needs.

The decision to establish the support for learning policy as a major priority in the school development plan ensured the targeting of resources and support in terms of information technology across a wide range of curricular areas, staff development time and INSET provision. Timetabling priorities were identified such as cooperative teaching in identified areas. In addition, the close day-to-day working involvement and leadership of a member of the senior management team, was also identified as critical to the promotion of the policy as a whole-school target.

Role of senior management

The support, commitment and active

involvement of senior management in a policy of support for learning is critical to its success. An active, hands-on approach by an identified member of the senior management team is essential if the policy is to be recognised by staff as having a high priority in the school. The close involvement of the senior management team member ensures that: all contributors clearly understand the role they play; resources can be provided and are appropriately targeted; and staff development needs are identified and supported. The clear commitment of time and energy by a member of the senior management team relates directly to the success and development of the school's support for learning policy.

> *" It's always keeping (pupils) on their toes so they'll enjoy what's happening and want to come to school. They like it. School is fun. It's enjoyable. (Pupils) know the staff like them and want to be with them. "*
>
> (Parent of a primary school child)

Extended learning support team

The strong, whole-school commitment to a support for learning policy to encompass all learners, whatever their needs and background difficulties, resulted in the establishment of an extended learning support team. This group, which is timetabled to meet in PAT and INSET days, is chaired by the appropriate member of the senior management team. The group has a representative from each subject department in the school, most usually a non-promoted member of the department, guidance principal teachers in charge of particular year groups and representatives of external agencies involved with the school, such as the educational child psychologist, school support unit members and the school attendance officer.

The particular needs related to individual pupils are fed into the group by the senior management team, guidance and external agencies representatives. Specific strategies and approaches which have been attempted are shared with the team by departmental representatives and recommendations and strategies for supporting the individual pupil and addressing his/her learning needs are then fed back into departments by their representatives. Each department allocates time at a departmental meeting to receive feedback from the extended learning support team meeting and written recommendations are given to class teachers and are made available in a departmental file. An ongoing process of review and evaluation led by the senior management team member who chairs the team ensures that the success or otherwise of the recommendations are shared with the team and adjustments made accordingly.

Over the years, the extended learning

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support team has provided a crucial forum for cross-departmental collaboration in the identification and promotion of learning and teaching strategies to support pupils with a wide range of identified learning needs and background problems. It has played a critical role in promoting the concept that the problem may not necessarily lie with the learner, but may relate to classroom methodology, the need for a variety of learning and teaching styles, the provision of varied and appropriate teaching resources or the setting of inappropriate targets for individual learners.

The contribution of guidance and external agencies

Guidance staff are obviously crucial to the whole process of supporting pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. They can inform classroom teachers about the individual needs and/or background of particular pupils. However, in addition to that information-giving role, they need to be empowered to contribute to the discussions on the identification of appropriate learning and teaching strategies to meet the needs of pupils in their charge. They must be accorded recognition as having an important role in contributing to and informing such curricular issues.

Likewise, representatives of external agencies must be seen by the school as partners in the learning/teaching process. They must be given an opportunity to inform the discussion on appropriate learning/ teaching strategies. They must be involved in the feedback regarding the success or failure of recommendations. They must also be involved in the follow-up to support pupils to enable them to benefit from the provision made for them.

In St Aidan's High School we have found that the extended learning support team provides an ideal forum for guidance and external agencies to make such contributions. Once again, the attitude and support of senior management is crucial, if the contribution of guidance and external agencies is to be valued and given recognition.

The role of learning support specialists and school resource centre

The school's two learning support specialist staff are based in the school resource centre. This centrally-based resource area is a whole-school resource, supporting resource-based learning and teaching. The major part of the whole-school strategy for support for learning has been to establish the central role of the school resource centre, with no separate learning support base or unit as such.

The commitment of the senior management team has been to ensure that the centre is kept resourced to a very high standard, with a substantial input of IT. Pupils of all abilities work alongside each

other in this area and all resources are available to all pupils and staff. There is equality of access to all resources, such as lap-top computers and CD Rooms, for pupils across the full ability and age spectrum. The role of IT in providing motivation and stimulus for pupils with particular needs cannot be overemphasised.

In the school resource centre, learning support specialists, subject teachers and the school librarian work cooperatively and can, therefore, provide a genuinely differentiated approach to mixed ability teaching to meet the needs of all learners. There is a team approach with shared responsibility for teaching the various groups of pupils. Such a team approach obviously enhances the credibility of the learning support specialist in the eyes of classroom teachers and encourages a sense of common purpose and responsibility for the needs of all pupils, whatever their background difficulties or learning requirements.

Staff development

The identification of staff development needs to support the whole-school approach to support for learning is obviously critically important. In St Aidan's High School, we have identified differentiation and classroom management issues as being at the heart of an attempt to provide an appropriate curriculum for all pupils. As a result, we have invested a considerable input of staff development time, INSET provision and material resources to support these needs.

Issues for consideration in adopting a support for learning policy

The brief confines of this article do not allow an in-depth elaboration of the policies and strategies outlined above. However, the main underpinning philosophy which over the years has guided all our approaches to supporting pupils with a wide range of learning needs and background difficulties, can be summarised as follows:

- adopt a whole-school approach to support for learning, encompassing issues of staff development and classroom methodology;
- within the context of the school development plan, identify specific targets and key personnel;
- ensure that an identified member of the senior management team plays an active, high-profile role in directing the policy.

The way forward will involve ongoing review and evaluation of progress made and resetting of specific targets in order to ensure that the school continues to support all pupils to achieve the best of which they are capable and to feel valued as individuals. Such an inclusive approach must include pupils presenting social, emotional and behavioural difficulties at all stages.

Developing a whole school policy for behaviour support

Moira Fleming, Galashiels Academy, Galashiels

Background

Galashiels Academy has a roll of around 1,000 pupils. Pupils attend from a wide catchment area, including the rural hinterland of small villages and scattered communities. The school is required to provide places for pupils with virtually the whole range of special educational needs from a wider vicinity than would normally apply. This is because of its status as a 'specially resourced' school in terms of its provision for such pupils.

A few years ago the local education authority adopted a new approach to the provision of support within secondary schools for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Such provision was regarded as an integral part of the learning support service. Previously it had been part of the guidance structure with a PT guidance in charge of a 'social skills unit'. The unit had been quite separate from learning support. Pragmatically, however, there had been an overlap and common concerns, not least being the needs of the pupils. The change of policy was greeted with enthusiasm by learning support staff who had found the artificial separation from behaviour support work irksome and irrational.

Key principles

In locating behaviour support within the learning support service, there was an acceptance, implied at least, of a number of key principles and practices which were well-established within that service.

- It rejects the 'deficit' model definition of 'problem' pupils, whereby problems are perceived as faults in the pupils.
- It accepts the contextualising of the problem, namely that behavioural difficulties may be due to the curriculum and the way it is delivered.
- It accepts that provision for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties is a whole-school issue and that the most appropriate place for all pupils to learn is in mainstream schooling.

Thus, well-established learning support roles would seem to fit the needs of the service: consultancy, curricular support in its widest sense, cooperative teaching, intensive tutorial support, provision of specialist assistance, liaison with outside agencies, and staff development.

This transformation of the support structure was elaborated in philosophical and procedural terms by the production of local authority guidelines. However, schools in the local authority responded differently to these guidelines and produced

structures which could either be seen as reflecting the true nature of their individual circumstances or of requiring the least amount of change within and of the system.

The school liaison group

The guidelines, based on a local research project, highlighted the need for new procedures, and a school liaison group was set up. Certain key personnel, from within and out-with the school, were members of this group. It tended to adopt a role similar to that of its predecessor which met as a court of late - or even last-resort, when the school's own efforts had apparently failed. However, it did also seek to set up logical procedures for referral and to bring together key agencies. The day-to-day running of behavioural support lay squarely within the learning support service, liaising with guidance, assistant heads and subject teachers, in very similar ways to those of the other elements of learning support service.

> *" Part of (better behaviour) may just be (pupils) own maturing. But I think the school should also take credit, not just (for) the direct input they've given, but also the indirect input to the home...so perhaps the (family) have been more positive about the child as well. "*
>
> (Primary teacher)

There was a degree of urgency in the initial stages of the new procedures. It had to be made clear to the main users of the SLG process how it would operate. Its relationship to existing school policies, notably discipline, was examined and a meshing of these, at least on paper, was undertaken. Meantime, learning support had to operate in the ways it knew best. Happily, it seemed to absorb the extension of its role and made good use of its existing personnel for the most part, while seeking in-service training. However, there were enough elements of change present to create tensions within the system and confusions among its users. The robustness of the learning support model was tested against a strongly prevailing perception of behavioural difficulty as fundamentally different from that of learning difficulty. The SLG was still a relatively remote entity unrelated to the reality of most teachers' situation.

Learning support policy

The next key stage was the timely setting up of a working group to develop a new whole-school learning support policy. Through it, the various aspects of the work of that department were expressed as a coherent set of principles and practices. The policy was arrived at by familiar means,

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namely through a 'whole-school' group, gathering information and perceptions, coming to common understandings, consulting with staff and building in an evaluation system. There was little response relating to the integration of behaviour support within a learning support framework and philosophy. This, perhaps, should have told us more about the nature of responses to such policies and about the real understanding of its implications.

Daily, it seemed, the procedures were 'tweaked' to improve the service or to respond to anomalies. Beyond that there was clearly a need to move from the existence on paper of a 'whole-school' system of behaviour support to develop an inclusive one supported by all staff. This depended on everyone knowing and understanding, operating within and feeling supported by that system. Here the stresses occasionally showed with teachers' expectations of the system mismatching the policy. There were occasions when the system seemed in danger of being overwhelmed by demand.

We had moved through a process and that process was constantly evolving. We had undertaken change based on a centrally conceived policy and therefore, we assumed, philosophical shift underpinned by guidelines for schools. We had moved from there to make procedural changes and put in place new structures; these changes had been articulated through restated school policies and beyond that there had been procedural fine-tuning. Nonetheless, key defining issues have emerged which need to be addressed. The aim of providing a truly proactive and coordinated provision for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties is still being developed.

Problems

Three major issues were discerned.

- The SLG as constituted was unable to be sufficiently proactive to allow early referral and intervention. This has been addressed through the operation of a more flexible, though still whole-school, sub-group.
- Harmonisation with existing, and at times apparently contrary, school policies, especially relating to discipline and exclusion, has required fairly fundamental rethinking.
- One essential idea seemed to be overlooked, that teachers' beliefs in what counts as effective behaviour management affects their practice. Teachers have different standards. Furthermore, intervention should take place in the context in which difficulties are reported.

It is clearly vital that we should be supporting and strengthening the new system. The essential element is staff development for class teachers and managers and not just for behaviour

support teachers. This is now being considered systematically at both school and local authority level.

Lessons learned

At this stage, as so often happens, it is possible to view the development not just in terms of its content but also in terms of its process. It has been, and still necessarily is, an evolving situation whose dimensions were not always recognised and so certain key features were overlooked. The need to communicate the range and rationale of the new policy and procedures clearly in advance is important if time and opportunity is to be given for existing attitudes and expectations to be 'unfrozen'. To do this, the prime movers must recognise the essentials of that change. Procedural change can mask something much more fundamental: that existing systems may work against other newly revised roles.

In moving from one philosophy to another, the mismatch must be recognised and the implications examined. Moving from a system based on a guidance model of concentration on improved pupil behaviour, but with no examination of teacher behaviour, to one based on an understanding of problems arising from an inappropriate curriculum has inevitably created tensions. It seems that it is inevitably hard for schools as a whole to grasp and retain the message that explanations for disruptive or disturbing behaviours can lie in the way that schools treat their pupils.

A school needs time and opportunity to examine such a change in understanding its approach to pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and to question its prevailing tenets. Many will need help in operating the changes, especially where they may challenge long-established beliefs and attitudes. The implementation of inclusive policies, to be successfully achieved, in practice as distinct from on paper, seems to need the kind of collegiality which has been evident in our school.

The role and work of a behaviour support unit

Karine Young, St Saviour's High School, Dundee

Context

St Saviour's High School has a roll of around 600 pupils and is situated on the periphery of Dundee in an area of multiple deprivation.

Like many other schools in the authority, St Saviour's had been aware for some time that its pupils with a range of social, emotional and behavioural difficulties were not being adequately supported. Consequently, they were often having a disruptive effect on their own and on others' education. Exclusion had not been the answer to the problem; off-site or residential provision, however effective or ineffective, was a disappearing alternative. The school, therefore, chose to seek to support these pupils as far as possible through the development of an internal resource — in this case, by setting up its review base in 1989.

Traditionally, St Saviour's has fostered a strong sense of community and, as a result, the primary aim of the review base was to maintain children in mainstream education as far as possible. From the outset pupils and staff were encouraged to see the review base as a positive support strategy, and not as an area to which pupils were sent for punishment and isolation.

The review base is staffed by two teachers, one of whom is a senior teacher. Both of these teachers are members of the support for learning department and are responsible to its principal teacher. Increasingly, in addition to operating the review base, these staff members contribute to the wider work of the department, for example, providing learning support in mainstream classes and using the 'Reading For Sure' programme.

The review base is situated in one classroom in the centre of the school. Close to the learning support base and the library, it is well-placed to allow staff and pupils easy access. The room is equipped with the normal range of school furniture, but in addition has a number of easy chairs, a low table and coffee-making facilities. The floor has been carpeted. The wall space in the room has been decorated by the pupils and the room contains a number of plants. The decor and arrangement of the room attempt to strike a balance between its 'functional' and 'social' purposes. Staff, who are encouraged to visit, comment on its calm and supportive atmosphere.

Functions

What is it that we are trying to do in the review base? Within the broad framework of being a reintegrative facility, we aim to achieve the following:

- to support and maintain pupils with a range of difficulties related to school

which may lead to behaviour outwith the normally acceptable range either in frequency or in intensity;

- to create an environment in which pupils feel secure in being able to discuss problems which may be manifested in school at any time;
- to work with pupils in developing better relationships with both staff and other pupils and promoting trust, self-esteem and social skills;
- to offer staff a support service of advice and strategies of management, helping them deal with pupils' disruptive behaviours within the classroom.

> *" We have looked at...structures for dealing with individual pupils, so that would include Learning Support as well as a discipline structure. ...Behaviour problems can be rooted in learning difficulties "*
>
> (Depute headteacher)

Referral system for the base

It should be noted that it is vitally important that review base staff should be central to the decision as to whether a youngster's difficulties are such that he/she would benefit from a placement. A lot of hard work has gone into maintaining this principle over the years; the success of our base, however, is underpinned by the fact that placement is not merely the outcome of a decision but rather the beginning of a healing process. Our centrality in the referral process is what makes this possible.

Referrals to the review base are made directly by the rector, any member of the board of management or by guidance staff, depending on the nature of the difficulty. A referral from a member of the board of management would typically be made after the normal disciplinary procedures had been exhausted. The nature of some of the difficulties identified by guidance teachers, however, can be so significant as to warrant direct, early intervention.

Following an initial conversation, the review base staff gather information on the child from as wide a range of sources as possible, and if the referral is seen as appropriate, a referral meeting is convened. Those present at that meeting include: the child, the child's parent(s) or guardian(s), the child's guidance teacher; a member of the social work department, a representative of the educational support services, the educational psychologist and a member of the school's board of management could also be invited when appropriate.

At this meeting the nature and extent of the pupil's difficulties will be explored, as will the kind of support that can be offered, the object being to formulate an individual programme which addresses the needs of the pupil and with which all present agree. Review base staff, of course, continue to liaise with parents and outside agencies throughout the duration of the

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pupil's placement within the review base.

Once the referral of a pupil to the base has been negotiated, a specific programme is devised which takes account of his/her particular needs. These needs dictate the type and extent of review base involvement, and the nature of the work to be undertaken, and may take any of the following forms:

- placement within the review base for all subjects for a period of time;
- placement within the review base for certain subjects for a limited period;
- placement within the review base for a particular subject;
- placement within the review base for certain periods of one or more than one subject, perhaps, for example, avoiding mainstream for the last hour of each day.

Strategies

How do we attempt to bring about the changes which the child needs to make to allow him/her to function as an integral part of the school community? These methods are many and various, and none of them really new. They include:

- counselling sessions;
- accompanying pupils to classes (especially at the reintegrative stage of the process);
- one-to-one support in the subject from which the pupil is withdrawn;
- role play and group activities;
- bridge-building between pupils and individual teachers;
- close involvement with outside agencies (for example, the social work department, educational support services and the psychology service);
- parental involvement wherever possible and at as high a level as possible;
- use of video camera for self-modelling;
- target-setting;
- behaviour monitoring by means of a behaviour diary carried by the pupil;
- a self-monitoring system or regular feedback from subject teachers.

These strategies are intended to lead to complete and successful reintegration to mainstream.

It is worth noting that although in a review base placement, in terms of the curriculum, the child remains the responsibility of the mainstream teacher in whose class he/she ought to be. This feature necessitates close liaison between review base staff and the relevant class teacher(s). We do maintain informal contact, however, even after the end of the placement and any future breakdown can be dealt with without the formal referral process having to be repeated.

Measuring success

It is seven years since the review base was established and several attempts to evaluate it, by means of questionnaires and surveys, have been made. Statistical evidence (regarding the number of pupils receiving support over the years) has never

seemed an appropriate measure. Results of the aforementioned questionnaires and surveys have all been positive; staff believe that this response to behavioural difficulties in our school is successful.

The single most reliable measure may well be the fact that we are still here: we have stood the test of time. In an economic climate where resources are finite, and perhaps diminishing, we continue to evolve and develop in response to the needs of our school community.

Lessons learned

There are several key factors which are vital to the success of a venture such as the review base, and which are to be commended to anyone who is considering setting up such a facility:

- Take the time to think about your aims and what, in terms of structures and facilities, you need to achieve them.
- Pay particular attention to your physical situation in the school and the atmosphere you create in it. (You will be shut away in more ways than one in a small, remote room at the far end of a little-used corridor.)
- A well-structured referral system is crucial to the effectiveness of what you can offer.
- Be aware of the importance of being, and being seen to be, reintegrative. Adhere to the principle that the children remain the responsibility of their classroom teacher at all times.
- Work hard at developing and maintaining links with guidance teachers, parents and outside agencies. Foster these human supports in whatever way you can, for success depends largely on the quality of these relationships, and time devoted to nurturing goodwill is time well-spent. The better the quality of relationships, the more flexible can be the response; the more flexible the response, the better the pupils' interests are served.

The way ahead

We are involved in an initiative aimed at introducing a supportive network within a whole-school approach to children who need some kind of special attention. Regular meetings of a network group include representatives of management, guidance, support for learning and relevant support agencies (educational, social work and/or the educational psychology service). It is hoped that such meetings will facilitate a more informed and cohesive response to the needs of the individual at whatever level of intervention.

In the past there has been a tendency to focus any difficulties wholly within the pupil. In the firm belief that there are other factors at work, we, working with the staff development group, hope to offer next session, in-service workshops using video material which will allow staff opportuni-

ties to discuss teacher-pupil interactions. We believe both experienced and probationary teachers can learn from these sessions as previous piloting of the material has proved promising.

For three or four years we have been endeavouring to develop positive management strategies in mainstream education. We have worked with departments or with individuals providing support and advice to encourage the adoption of a preventive, positive attitude to the management of classes. We currently provide in-class team-teaching support to teachers who are trying this approach.

Our success has been achieved along a long, hard road. Reaching our current position has involved a mixture of dogged determination and patient encouragement. We are now informed by even the less confident teacher that, 'It might be possible, with the right approach and techniques, to deal more effectively than before with "problem" pupils in the classroom.'

When the review base was initiated our aim was to facilitate a school community in which every child was valued and catered for in mainstream classes. Certainly, nowadays we see fewer referrals from the classroom relating to teacher-pupil conflict.

However, increasingly we are seeing younger referrals (it was almost unheard of to have S1 pupils referred in the early days of the review base) and difficulties of a different type than previously encountered. Like other schools, we are now having to deal very often with emotionally damaged children — children in whose lives the real conflicts are not essentially between the teacher and the pupil. These emotionally fragile young people are the products of society's ills, and schools, including facilities like ours, have to find a way to build meaningful, learning environments while dealing with factors largely outwith our direct control. Time will tell if our flexible approach can meet this fresh challenge.

Networking for behaviour support teachers

Janice Thomson, Glenwood High School, and Christine Wilson, Glenrothes High School, Glenrothes

Behaviour support centres

The management of pupils who present disturbing or disrupting behaviour in schools has long been an issue of concern for teachers. The present climate of commitment to maintain children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties in mainstream education has prompted local authorities to consider effective methods of addressing this challenge.

The trend in Fife has been to appoint small groups of staff to work with young people with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties within all secondary schools. The development of in-school behaviour support centres over the past 12-15 years is part of a continuum of provision. They extend the range of provision across mainstream schools, off-campus centres, day and residential provision. The structure is an authority-wide response to dealing with disturbing behaviour. Early intervention, in the context of where the problems are occurring, maximises the chances of the young people remaining within their local community.

Each secondary school customises its support service to suit its young people, the school and the wider community. Behaviour support teachers have developed wide-ranging strategies within the whole-school approach or policy framework of their own school. While training for staff in behaviour support centres is an area of continuing development, the potential for the practitioners themselves to share skills has not gone unnoticed.

This paper aims to report on the way in which a group of behaviour support teachers in central Fife collaborate to share their experience through a system of networking. The networking group consists of support centre staff from three secondary schools and their local off-campus centre and primary school support unit.

Why do we choose to network?

The staff in the Glenrothes area support centres come from a variety of educational backgrounds — secondary mainstream subjects, learning support and primary and special schools. Staff in the centres were encountering similar problems in developing approaches to meet the needs of pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties within the mainstream setting. Several features became apparent:

- the potential for behaviour support teachers to feel isolated and stressed and, therefore, the need for peer group support;
- the possibility of developing in-service training for staff coming from differing educational fields;
- the desire to identify and share good practice.

However, the purpose in the early days centred on providing emotional support and reassurance for the behaviour support teachers during the period of change for the schools in establishing the new support centres.

How the networking group started

Informal meetings set up on an *ad hoc* basis by the first two centres developed into regular monthly meetings in PAT. In the course of three to four years, the three secondary centres and the off-campus centre were established and their staff joined the group. Through trial and error, many changes and developments in the networking system have occurred since the original two teachers met. We began by providing peer support and we now encompass a whole range of staff needs including in-service training — a process which has evolved over six years.

What we do

The networking meetings serve as a vehicle for considering the following three areas:

Sharing Good Practice:

- effective use of cooperative/ companion teaching;
- running social skills group work sessions;
- individual counselling;
- designing individualised, educational programmes for pupils
- working with other agencies;
- working with families and carers;
- evaluating and sharing resource materials;
- visiting other establishments.

Staff Development

- identifying and coordinating in-service training for teachers and auxiliaries;
- inviting other professionals to speak on their area of experience;
- providing feedback from in-service courses.

Awareness-Raising

- discussing national, authority and school initiatives;
- responding as a group to consultation documents.

Steps in developing the group

There were several key steps in

moving the group on from an informal support network to the present planned and structured system. We quickly recognised that we required to negotiate a programme if we were to provide for everyone's interests and needs. Establishing a focus and purpose became increasingly vital as the group expanded and new staff became involved. Yearly programmes were set, providing an agenda for each monthly meeting in PAT. Training programmes for INSET days were also arranged in consultation with our own schools.

The group continues to function democratically with members playing an equal part in planning and decision-making. Each school takes it in turn to host the meeting. The business is chaired and minuted by a member from the host school. The importance of allowing time for informal chat over coffee has been retained from the early days.

The success of the group is apparent by the fact that it continues to meet regularly, despite some staff changes. Enthusiasm and commitment to networking are also evident in the proposal of new ideas for future discussion topics. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the group was carried out in a recent survey of past and present members. Their views indicate that the networking system is highly valued.

Lessons learned

It is important to have clear aims for the networking group. The group has survived and continued to develop as we came to realise that an unfocused social gathering was not enough. People became more confident in their own settings and wished to address issues in a detailed fashion. The meetings needed to consider staff development matters and other relevant issues. Time was precious, therefore agendas and a year's programme needed to be planned in advance. Joint discussion resulted in a variety of relevant and interesting topics being identified. The workload of hosting and minuting meetings or of arranging speakers was shared, ensuring that an 'elite committee' was not created. No one was left with an onerous task. None of this happened overnight but developed gradually.

It is doubtful that the group would function satisfactorily without the backing of the schools' senior managements. In order to meet in PAT, we found it was essential not only to get the agreement of our schools, but to ensure adequate feedback to them so that the system of support centres' networking would be understood and valued. Therefore, when we asked for time on INSET days for workshops, these requests were generally received favourably. Opening the workshops to the wider audience of staff within our own schools, as well as behaviour support staff from other areas, has enhanced the credibility of the networking group.

We acknowledge that a major factor in the success of the group is our geographical proximity. We feel, however, the advantages of meeting would persuade us to find a way round the problem of travelling greater distances if necessary — perhaps by using some school time with the approval of our headteachers. Not everyone would need to get away early every time. Meetings could be less frequent with perhaps more use of INSET days. Flexibility in each school's allocation and use of PAT is an issue worth raising.

Networking is an effective vehicle for staff development for behaviour support teachers. If it is recognised as a valuable and economical strategy, then schools need to be prepared to support networking by allocating appropriate time and resources.

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Further reading

The following are suggested as starting points. They contain references to other work which could be useful.

Blyth E (ed) (1996) *School Exclusions: Interprofessional Issues For Policy And Practice* London: Routledge.

Cohen R, Hughes M J, Ashworth L, and Blair M (1994) *School's Out: The Family Perspective On School Exclusion* London: Barnardo's.

Mosley J (1995) *Turn Your School Around* Cambridge: LDA.

Munn P (ed) (1994) *Schooling With Care? Developing Provision For Children And Young People Presenting Social, Emotional And Behavioural Difficulties* Edinburgh: SCRE.

SCCC (1995) *A Sense of Belonging* Dundee: SCCC.

SCCC (1995) *The Heart of the Matter* Dundee: SCCC.

SCCC (1996) *Teaching for Effective Learning* Dundee: SCCC.

White M (1994) *Self-Esteem, Its Meaning And Value In Schools* Cambridge: Daniels Publishing.

There are also a number of professional journals in which ideas of inclusiveness and details about particular teaching approaches are described. Two of particular relevance which contain short, easy to read articles are:

Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties; and
Forum.

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Teachers have a wealth of experience in providing support for pupils presenting social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. They rarely share with others the strategies they use. This publication provides examples from nursery, primary and secondary schools of a range of successful approaches. These will help others reflect on their own practice and stimulate discussion about the strengths and weaknesses of approaches in their own schools. This is a companion publication to *Schooling with Care*. That publication focused on policy at authority and school levels. This publication concentrates on school and classroom practice.

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